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and Roman periods in Asia Minor, this does not mean that the Persians themselves did. Rather, the implication is that certain aspects of Persian identity and culture had become a lasting (and admittedly ill-defined) part of the multicultural landscape of Asia Minor. There is an interesting parallel for this in Egypt: the “Persians of the Epigone” who are attested in Ptolemaic sources. By the second century BCE this term had come to be a status designation, one which provided a degree of social mobility, rather than a marker of ethnicity (Vandorpe 2008). Thus, in both Egypt and Asia Minor Persian identity seems to have gone beyond ethnic origins alone.

This volume inspires many such brainstorm, and it has much to offer even to someone reading these papers for the second or third time. Especially in combination with *From Cyrus to Alexander* (Briant 2002) and the newly published collection of his English-language papers (Briant 2018), it provides easy access to Briant’s vast scholarship on the Achaemenid Empire, and is essential for any library that supports the study of ancient Persia. Of course, individual readers may bemoan the omission of favorite papers (in my case, Briant 1988!), but naturally this does not detract from the immense value and utility of this collection.

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METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Parthika: Greek and Roman Authors’ Views of the Arsacid Empire. Edited by JOSEF WIESEHÖFER and SABINE MÜLLER. *Classica et Orientalia*, vol. 15. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2017. Pp. xiii + 312. €78.

This volume is the second resulting from the conference “Bilder des Orients: Megasthenes, Apollodoros von Artemita und Isidoros von Charax,” organized at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität in Kiel in 2012. The first volume, *Megasthenes und seine Zeit / Megasthenes and His Time*, edited by Josef Wiesehöfer, Horst Brinkhaus, and Reinhold Bichler (*Classica et Orientalia*, vol. 13, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz) came out in 2016. The papers in this volume focus on Apollodoros of Artemita (three contributions) and Isidoros of Charax (four contributions). They are preceded by an elaborate paper on Greek acculturation in the Arsacid empire.

The second half of the volume contains four contributions—on Flavius Josephus, Trogus-Justinus, Tacitus, and Arrian, important authors for the Graeco-Roman perspective on Parthia and the Parthians. Although the title on the cover is in English (the title page also has a German title: *Griechisch-römische Bilder des Arsakidenreiches*), only three papers are in English; the others are in German (eight) and French (one). The short introduction by the editors is also in German.

In this introduction the editors explain that the main purpose of the volume is to contribute to the discourse on the dimensions of the Graeco-Roman literary sources about the Arsacid empire and their stereotypical view, as was already made clear from an earlier volume edited by Wiesehöfer: *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse* (1998), as well as in additional publications dealing with otherness.

The opening contribution here by Mark Olbrycht presents an overview of Greeks and Greek culture in the Parthian empire. In spite of the facts that many Arsacid rulers present themselves as philhellene, that there still were many Greeks living in various parts and cities of Iran, and that the Greek language was widespread among the Parthian elites, this nevertheless does not mean that Parthian society was Hellenized, as some scholars think. Olbrycht argues convincingly, staying close to the sources (both literary and material), that Iranian culture and the Parthian ethos were predominant and that the presence of Greek culture in the Arsacid empire should not be overestimated.

The three contributions on Apollodoros of Artemita open with an interesting paper by Johannes Engels, who examines the complex question of Apollodoros's *Parthika* as the principal source for Strabo's information about the Parthian empire in his *Geographica*, and what this tells us about the character of Apollodoros's work, since its remaining fragments and hence its "reconstruction" are predominantly based on Strabo. Engels rightly calls for caution, arguing that Strabo's (geographical and ethnographical) information about Parthia is rather superficial and incomplete and says nothing about the contents of the *Parthika*: Strabo may have relied on other authors instead of using Apollodoros directly, or, considering his intellectual aims, he might have given his own version and/or interpretation of a text passage rather than slavishly copying Apollodoros.

Krzysztof Nawotka's paper is also concerned with the reconstruction of Apollodoros's text. In addition to the passages mentioned by D'Hautcourt in the *Brill New Jacoby*, he proposes three possible passages going back to Apollodoros: Strabo (11.9.2–3) and Pompeius Trogus-Justinus (Just. 41) on the beginnings of Parthia; Strabo (11.10.2) and Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 6.46) on Margiana; and Strabo (11.9.2) and Pompeius Trogus-Justinus (Just. 41.6.8) about the division of the inhabited world between Rome and Parthia.

If these passages are indeed derived from Apollodoros, there are consequences for the date of composition of the *Parthika*. While common opinion dates the text to the beginning of the first century BCE, based on Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 6.46 the terminus post quem would be 53 BCE, which makes an earlier date possible. The date of composition of the *Parthika* is also discussed by Sabine Müller. Apart from the date, she offers a survey of the various perspectives in scholarship about Apollodoros's sociopolitical milieu, the value of the *Parthika* as historical source, and its possible use by Trogus-Justinus. Not surprisingly, Müller concludes that we know next to nothing about Apollodoros and the contents and value of his work.

The four papers on Isidoros of Charax are opened by Monika Schuol. She contextualizes Isidoros's *Stathmoi Parthikoi*, a work most likely composed around the beginning of the Christian era that describes the route from Zeugma on the Euphrates to Alexandria in Arachosia, by comparing it to Greek literature (Herodotos, Ktesias, Alexandrian Bematists, and Strabo), but especially to Roman *Itineraria*. She suggests that the *Stathmoi* are the missing link between Graeco-Roman geographical writings and Roman itinerary texts. Apart from the fact that the *Stathmoi* provide geographical information about routes and have therefore a practical use, perhaps even more important is its ideological function: the *Stathmoi* represent Rome's *imperium sine fine* and are a reflection of the idea of territorial supremacy by Rome over Parthia.

More profound and much longer in length is Udo Hartmann's article about the *Stathmoi*. As known from other sources, it is not Isidoros's only geographical work; he also composed a general geographical work describing the world from Britain to India, as well as a periegesis of Parthia. It may be that the *Stathmoi Parthikoi* is either an excerpt from or an epitome of the latter work that was published independently. Hartmann emphasizes the importance of the *Stathmoi* for reconstructing the administrative structure of the Arsacid empire. Moreover, he argues convincingly against the *Stathmoi* as a text describing a commercial route between Iran and China and India, or a text that primarily had a military purpose. Instead, the text describes a route comparable to the Roman *cursus publicus* with its *mansiones* and *mutationes* serving those who traveled in the service of the state.

However, according to Hartmann, the text should also be seen as a product of Hellenistic geographical learning fitting very well into Greek tradition as well as reflecting the general interest in the Augustan period for geography and a curiosity about the Iranian regions in particular. Hartmann also argues persuasively against the common identification of Isidoros of Charax with Dionysios of Spasinou Charax, who is mentioned by Pliny the Elder (*Nat. Hist.* 6.141).

Stefan Hauser discusses the same matter and agrees with Hartmann that it concerns two different authors coming from two different localities: Charax (probably modern Kerkuk) and Spasinou Charax, and not from the same Charax as in the *communis opinio*. Hauser's fascinating albeit technical paper makes a careful and well-argued attempt at reconstructing the route from Zeugma to Seleucia on the Euphrates as described by Isidoros. His reconstruction (maps and a table of all sites mentioned in the *Stathmoi* are included) is an important contribution to historical topography. Such a reconstruction is not an easy task, if only because Isidoros gives distances in *schoinoi* and the length of a *schoinos* differs considerably among ancient sources. Hauser opts for the distances that can be derived from Polybios (5.328 km) and Strabo (5.55 km).

The part beyond Seleucia differs in that Isidoros presents regions rather than specific localities as he does in the first part. Like Hartmann, Hauser maintains that the *Stathmoi* was not composed for commercial or military purposes and that it is a compilation of earlier geographical material available in Mesopotamia and Babylonia, which makes it a work of Greek scholarship created under Arsacid rule.

In the last contribution on the *Stathmoi*, Rüdiger Schmitt, who identifies Isidoros with Dionysios of Spasinou Charax, makes among others the interesting observation that the first part of the text (i.e., the itinerary Zeugma-Seleucia) was composed by a different author than the second part (i.e., the route from Seleucia to Alexandria). However, the focus of his contribution is on potential Iranian toponyms in the second part of the *Stathmoi*. Schmitt concludes that his exercise is rather disappointing since the *Stathmoi* have only a few geographical names that are also attested in oriental sources.

Although the articles on the texts of Apollodorus and Isidoros are uneven in length and profundity, they are valuable contributions to scholarship on these sources and more broadly on mapping the Iranian world of the Arsacids. They form a unity and are a fine complement to the Megasthenes volume mentioned above. As far as I am concerned, the book could have ended here. However, it continues with another four contributions that focus on the representation of Parthia and the Parthians.

Erich Gruen concludes, not surprisingly, that apart from some casual observations and an occasional sordid remark, there is very little about the Parthians in Flavius Josephus. Sabine Müller, who discusses at length the background of Justinus's epitome of Pompeius Trogus, deduces that Trogus-Justinus presents the Parthians as a warlike people of Scythian background and as hegemon over the eastern part of the world. The Romans, who rule over the western world, are, however, superior and morally and politically triumphant over the Parthian *alter orbis*.

Tacitus too considered Parthia to be a different world, one in which he was not particularly interested, and which, as Matthäus Heil argues, he discusses only in the context of Roman politics, diplomacy, and military activities. Moreover, Tacitus regarded the Parthians as barbarians and characterizes them in the negative stereotypical way that can also be found in other literary sources. The last contribution, by Charlotte Lerouge-Cohen, examines the image of the Parthian as it arises from the fragmentarily preserved *Parthika* of Arrian. She deals with the origin of the Parthians (whom Arrian considers to be of Scythian descent), the beginnings of Arsacid rule, and Parthian military equipment and armor.

This volume, in particular the first part, is a welcome contribution to scholarship about the Graeco-Roman literary evidence on the Arsacid empire. All of the contributions make it clear how little we actually know about the Arsacid empire and how biased and stereotypical Graeco-Roman perception of Parthian society was. But that is not a new insight.

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